

## A QUESTION OF LOYALTY

### GERMAN CHURCHES IN READING DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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**ABSTRACT:** In Reading, churches formed during the colonial period gradually transitioned to using the English language in worship services, while new congregations were established to serve the religious needs of the newer German immigrants. St. John's German Lutheran Church, St. Paul's United Evangelical Church, and Zion's German Reformed Church all held German language services when the First World War began, but by the end of the war, the use of the German language in worship services and parochial education led to questions about patriotism. At the same time, institutions with German names came under attack, and prominent industrialists who were German immigrants and members of these congregations were suspected of disloyalty. This article explores the impact of the First World War on Reading's German churches and their members, particularly examining questions of patriotism and military service.

**KEYWORDS:** Religion, German Americans, Reading, the First World War

The First World War proved to be a challenging time for Pennsylvania's residents with German ancestry. Government officials perceived German American churches to be foreign and its members disloyal. US Army officials asked Pennsylvania Gov. Martin Grove Brumbaugh if he needed federal troops to maintain order among the Pennsylvania Germans, not realizing the difference between Pennsylvania Germans (whose ancestors had arrived in the eighteenth century and who had patriotically served in the armed forces during wartime) and German Americans. The Pennsylvania German Society discontinued its meetings between 1916 and 1920 because of concerns about anti-German sentiment. Larger cities such as Philadelphia and Pittsburgh witnessed protests against anything German, while in smaller communities,

churches continued German-language worship services throughout the war. Reading, Pennsylvania, fell between the larger cities and the smaller communities, and its residents dealt with anti-German sentiment and suspicions of pro-German activity.<sup>1</sup>

With the outbreak of war in August 1914, newspapers in Reading focused not only on the progress of the conflict but also on how the Great War affected families in Reading and Berks County. The front page of the *Reading News-Times* announced the beginning of the war in the first column of the August 3 issue, and in column six “Reading Families Worry for Their People in Europe” as the war disrupted communication. Among those affected were Edwin A. Quier and his family, who notified William Seyfert, president of the *Reading Eagle*, that they were still in Hamburg, Germany.<sup>2</sup> The *Eagle* reported Germany declaring war on Russia on the front page of the August 2, 1914, issue, and it mentioned Reading physician Dr. Malcolm Z. Gearhart had cut short a medical conference and returned home on a British vessel instead of a German one. It also noted a German army officer employed at the Textile Machine Works, owned by Henry K. Janssen and Ferdinand Thun, returned to Germany to serve his homeland, and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt attended the dedication of the battleship *Maine* anchor in Reading’s Penn’s Common (also known as City Park).<sup>3</sup> The latter event tied together the last war with the new one, as Company I, the first regiment to represent Reading and Berks County during the First World War, came into existence during the Spanish-American War precipitated by the destruction of the battleship *Maine*.<sup>4</sup>

Traveling to Germany like Quier and his family was not unusual for Reading’s residents, as 2,754 of them in 1910 were born in Germany, and another 1,415 had immigrated from Austria, Germany’s primary ally in the war.<sup>5</sup> The community of Reading had been heavily influenced by German immigration since the 1700s. By the time of the Revolution, at least 80 percent of the population was of German ancestry. That percentage declined by the late nineteenth century, yet almost 70 percent of the foreign-born population were natives of Germany and Austria. With increasing immigration from southern and eastern Europe in the early twentieth century, the percentage declined to 53 percent in 1900 and 47 percent in 1910. Natives of Germany, however, continued to be the single largest nation of origin, and, when including residents whose parents were born in Germany, they still heavily influenced life and culture in Reading in the early twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

The immigration of German-speaking people to Reading from the 1840s to the 1910s affected Reading's churches. Denominations that had established German-language congregations in the 1750s had transitioned to using the English language in worship services by the 1850s. The spiritual and social needs of these immigrants, along with those of local residents who preferred to worship in the language of their ancestors, led to the establishment of new German-language congregations during the second half of the nineteenth century. The impact of the First World War on three of these congregations—St. John's German Lutheran Church, St. Paul's United Evangelical Church, and Zion's German Reformed Church—and their members is the focus of this article.<sup>7</sup>

St. John's German Lutheran Church, officially known as *Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Sankt Johannes Gemeinde*, organized in August 1860 after Trinity Lutheran Church, the first Lutheran church in Reading, began conducting services in English. Rev. Johann J. Kuendig, a native of Switzerland and assistant pastor at Trinity, was the first pastor. The congregation dedicated their church building at Ninth and Walnut streets in November 1861, and ministers from Germany and the Reading area preached in English and German at the dedication service. Local railroad companies sold excursion tickets at reduced prices for the ceremony, with announcements stating that "no hucksters or cake stands" were permitted within two blocks of the church.<sup>8</sup> The congregation established a parochial school in October 1865 for religious training and education in the German language; the latter proved to be an issue after the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917.<sup>9</sup> By 1909, St. John's had over fifteen hundred members, and Kuendig still served as pastor.<sup>10</sup> Worship services used only the German language until 1916, when Rev. Philip Kirchner, Kuendig's successor, began occasionally preaching in English.<sup>11</sup>

Zion's German Reformed Church, officially known as *Deutsche Reformirte Zions Gemeinde der Stadt Reading*, organized in August 1881 as a mission of the *Deutschen Synode des Ostens* (German Synod of the East) of the Reformed Church. Formed in response to First Reformed Church (the original German Reformed congregation in Reading) and subsequent Reformed congregations in Reading conducting worship services in English, Zion's transitioned from mission status by 1890. The congregation, led by Rev. Levi K. Derr, dedicated their church in August 1883 after previously holding services at Fisher's Hall and Breneiser's Hall (location of the Reading YMCA).

In 1909, Zion's had six hundred members, and Rev. Carl H. Gramm served as pastor.<sup>12</sup>

St. Paul's United Evangelical Church organized in March 1900, with the first service held at the Philadelphia and Reading's (Reading Railroad) YMCA building. This church developed from a schism within the Evangelical Association, a German religious group heavily influenced by Methodism. Weeknight prayer meetings, German classes, and English classes constituted the outreach activities of the congregation.<sup>13</sup> The cornerstone of the church building was laid July 8, 1900, and a combined choir from the other United Evangelical churches sang special anthems.<sup>14</sup> The group grew quickly, increasing from 152 attendees at the first services to 500 members in 1909.<sup>15</sup> The United Evangelical Church limited pastorates to five years; as a result, St. Paul's, unlike St. John's or Zion's, changed pastors during the war.<sup>16</sup>

The outbreak of war had no immediate impact on these churches, as anti-German sentiment was not yet an issue. Because a large percentage of the population of Germany and Austria were Lutheran, their pastors were "especially ardent in their supplications" for universal peace in their sermons on August 2. At Zion's German Reformed Church, the congregation celebrated its thirty-third anniversary that Sunday, and Rev. Carl F. Gramm preached in German on "Peace, Present, Past and Future."<sup>17</sup>

Two weeks later, Rev. Philip Kirchner of St. John's German Lutheran Church used "The German Situation in the Present European War" as the theme for his sermon. The *Reading News-Times* reported, "As German-American citizens, who still have many loved ones in the Fatherland, they have intense personal interest in this war." According to the *News-Times*, Kirchner further stated, "the strongest force which will be Germany's asset in this fight will not be its strong army and powerful navy, but Germany's trust in God, which has always been Germany's stronghold in the many conflicts for its liberty and very existence during her history." Kirchner concluded with a reference to Martin Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."<sup>18</sup>

The *Reading Eagle* published the entire text of Kirchner's sermon the following Saturday, and the tone differed from the account in the *News-Times*. The pastor noted, "At this time, more than ever, we are conscious of the fact that ours is a German church, where the Word of God is read and preached, and our prayers are spoken in the German language." Kirchner again attacked the American press for not remaining impartial in reporting news of the conflict, pointing out that the local newspapers relied on reports from

England and not from Germany. He explained the conflict was one caused by Serbia, England, France, and Russia. According to Kirchner,

It is a war of life for Germany, a struggle for its very existence, its liberty, its civilization. Germany enters this struggle with clean hands and a clean conscience. In this sense the war is a moral war for Germany, while England and France must be ashamed of their participation in it, as any war waged solely for greed, hatred, aggrandizement, vengeance, or jealousy [*sic*] and commercial rivalry, must be condemned as immoral, and the motive for the alliance of France and England which has lead [*sic*] these nations to enter the struggle, must be charged as immoral.<sup>19</sup>

He concluded, "The Germans can be conscious that they stand on the side of God in this war, because they are on the side of righteousness and they can be confident that God will not forsake them."<sup>20</sup>

That fall, there was hope for a quick resolution to the hostilities in Europe. On October 5, St. John's German Lutheran hosted a city-wide gathering. Reverend Kirchner preached peace sermons at both services, and attendees prayed that hostilities in Europe be brought to a speedy close.<sup>21</sup> The conflict, unfortunately, did not end as quickly as Kirchner and his parishioners hoped.

The war continued to be a topic for sermons over the next few years. On May 2, 1915, Kirchner read a sermon preached in Germany on the war.<sup>22</sup> Because St. John's, St. Paul's, and Zion's included recent immigrants among their parishioners, some members had relatives serving in the German army. Mrs. Henrietta Priebe, a member of St. John's, received lengthy letters and postcards from her grandson Otto, who served in the Field Artillery in France. Shortly before her death, she received a postcard of Otto in his field uniform with a forest in the background. He also sent letters describing "the conditions and activities of the war," which she shared with Rev. Philip Kirchner, who read them to the congregation later that month.<sup>23</sup>

While Kirchner's sermons focused on the war, those of Rev. Carl H. Gramm of Zion's followed more traditional religious themes. Topics included "Jesus the Way of the Truth and Life," "God's Promise to Abraham," "The Value of Christ's Coming," "How Can We Receive Christ," "Faith in Christ," "True Christianity," and "Walking With the Wise" in the fall of 1914 and spring of 1915.<sup>24</sup>

Gramm's sermons focused mostly on the congregation's spiritual needs, but when Washington Camp 163 of the Patriotic Order of the Sons of America (POSA) presented an American flag to Zion's on July 4, 1915, the *News-Times* reported he used the occasion to attack England. According to the *News-Times*, Gramm remarked, "If the United States is tricked into this war that is tearing Europe apart, don't shoot at our parents, at our fathers and mothers, but shoot at the flag that through the years has been our enemy—that is England." Gramm reportedly continued, "England tricked us into the Lusitania affair, she is now watching to trick us into another." He concluded, "If we are led into the war, by her it shall be, and when it is over we shall know how we had been blind-folded." Gramm, who the *News-Times* stated opposed the war and preached against it, also attacked local newspapers' reporting of the conflict: "Don't believe the papers you read. They are controlled by English capitalists. My message to you is don't shoot at your mothers and fathers, if we are involved into this war, shoot at the real foe of your country."<sup>25</sup>

The *Reading Eagle's* account of the same sermon provided a different perspective. Gramm "warmly thanked the camp for the gift and declared that it would be cherished by the church as only a gift of such a nature can." His sermon focused on the history of the flag, noting the contributions of Betsy Ross and Molly Pitcher. Similar to other Reading Protestant clergy, Gramm also spoke on John Huss's martyrdom five hundred years earlier.<sup>26</sup> The *Eagle* did not mention any of the vicious rhetoric published in the *News-Times*, and Gramm wrote a letter to the editor of the *News-Times* condemning their "very misleading and very unfortunate" article.<sup>27</sup>

For St. Paul's, there never was a question about which side the minister and the congregation supported. Washington's Birthday prompted a patriotic sermon by Rev. Henry E. Fassnacht in February 1915. At the meeting of the Young People's Society later that week, attendees received small hatchets in honor of the holiday.<sup>28</sup> That August, special programs commemorated the sixth anniversary of the church's Bible class.<sup>29</sup>

Members of these congregations, meanwhile, became involved in German war relief efforts. Jacob Nolde, co-owner of Nolde and Horst Hosiery Mill and secretary of the Consistory (Church Council) at Zion's German Reformed, contributed \$5,000 toward a relief fund for war victims, to be distributed through the Red Cross and similar organizations in Germany. His co-owner George Horst, a member of St. John's German Lutheran, donated a matching amount. Ferdinand Thun, whose wife had been raised in Zion's and

whose twin sons had recently been confirmed at St. John's, and his partner Henry K. Janssen, a former member of Zion's who had recently joined St. John's, each contributed \$2,000 to the cause. Philip Bissinger, president of Reading Brewing Company and also a member of St. John's, donated \$1,000. Combined, these industrial leaders and others raised \$20,000 in contributions, with donations ranging from \$3 to \$5,000.<sup>30</sup>

At first, Reading industries also supported the Allied war effort. Ferdinand Thun and Henry K. Janssen were unwilling to produce for the war, but were "willing to supply British textile plants with machinery for domestic uses." However, the sinking of the British steamship *Leo* on July 2, 1915, led Ferdinand Thun and Henry K. Janssen to decide to refuse future shipments. The *Leo* carried a large consignment of textile machinery manufactured at Textile Machine Works in Wyomissing, destined for the mills at Manchester. German U-boats torpedoed the ship off the Irish coast, and it sank with the equipment on board.<sup>31</sup>

The *Reading News-Times* did not support this decision. On July 10, 1915, the *News-Times* reported that the Textile Machine Works of Wyomissing "refused war orders for the allies from exporting firms of New York, which would have meant profits of \$30,000." Bloomfield & Rapp Co., of Chicago, from its New York offices, wanted the company to finish shrapnel shell forgings.<sup>32</sup> Ferdinand Thun explained, "I consider it against the neutrality proclamation of President Wilson for this nation to make munitions of war for any of the struggling armies of Europe and Asia." When asked to explain why his firm refused to accept war orders, Thun emphatically replied, "It is barbarous, it is inhuman and it is immoral. . . . Textile Machine Company will not accept orders from any nation . . . to supply any arms or munitions to carry on this war."<sup>33</sup> Because the Textile Machine Works refused to fill orders for the Allies, it was included on a "white list" of manufacturers that refused to trade with England. At the same time, Thun continued to trade with German companies, even traveling to New London, Connecticut, to purchase needles and dyestuffs shipped on the *Deutschland*.<sup>34</sup>

Nolde & Horst Company also turned down contracts for war supplies for the Allies as well, but for a different reason. In an editorial published in the July 23, 1915, issue of the *News-Times*, the author noted that it was not surprising because of the owners' contributions to the German war relief fund (which Thun and Janssen had also done). Also, Nolde & Horst had ample orders from the United States and did not need the business.<sup>35</sup> Another factor was a strike that began on March 13, 1914, and called off on June 14, 1915,

shutting down production until the courts ordered the striking workers back to work.<sup>36</sup> The company finally resumed operations on July 21.<sup>37</sup>

Prior to the United States' entry into the First World War, the churches in Reading that used German in their worship services continued to operate without concern. Zion's German Reformed Church remodeled its building in 1915, with a new balcony installed that seated one hundred. The interior was painted and frescoed, and the aisles on the main floor were narrowed to increase seating capacity.<sup>38</sup> When Zion's German Reformed celebrated its thirty-fourth anniversary in August 1915, it provided Rev. Carl H. Gramm with an opportunity to reflect on the need for his parishioners to be more active participants in the life of the church and community. Gramm noted, "We not only know our neighborhood, our neighbors know us, and we have demonstrated our love to them until today Zion's Reformed Church is known as the neighborly church."<sup>39</sup> Gramm continued to use that slogan on church promotional materials through the end of the decade. The church slightly increased in membership during the war from 738 members in 1916 to 759 in 1918.<sup>40</sup>

St. Paul's United Evangelical Church also faced little opposition. Rev. Henry E. Fassnacht sang a German hymn and preached in German on Mother's Day in 1915.<sup>41</sup> Fassnacht, who served as pastor at St. Paul's from 1911 to 1916, saw the remaining indebtedness on the parsonage paid off, grading of classes in the Sunday School, and extensive improvements to the church property during his pastorate.<sup>42</sup> The young people of St. Paul's started raising funds toward purchasing a pipe organ for the church in December 1915.<sup>43</sup> Fassnacht departed St. Paul's in February 1917, preaching his last sermon in German in the morning and in English during the evening.<sup>44</sup>

For St. John's German Lutheran Church, music was a highlight of their activities. In January 1916, choir members serenaded their pastor, Rev. Philip Kirchner, with "songs of their far-a-way fatherland of Germany" and presented him with a fruit basket for his birthday.<sup>45</sup> That March, the church hosted a song service that included scripture lessons and community singing, with the Apollo Male Chorus and Orpheus Male Quartet accompanying the congregation.<sup>46</sup> The Youths' Society arranged a program that May that included songs, musical performances, a short play, a monologue, and a speech by Reverend Kirchner.<sup>47</sup>

When the United States officially declared war on Germany in April 1917, the citizens of Reading eagerly demonstrated their patriotism through parades and rallies, and even the draft generated support. Newspapers



printed lists of enlistees in the army. Motorists developed a “salute and ride” program to carry servicemen in uniform to their destination. Women registered for various types of war work, including volunteering as nurses. Greek immigrants who were veterans of the Balkan war volunteered to serve their adopted country. According to the *Reading News-Times*, “Practically every man expressed a willingness to go to war when the time came. Volunteering for service rather than being drafted appeared to meet with more favor.” Men ineligible for military service sought opportunities to serve in other ways on the home front.<sup>48</sup> The American Red Cross recruited volunteers from Reading Hospital’s nursing school to serve at home and abroad, but they did not have military rank.<sup>49</sup> Over ten thousand men registered for the draft on June 5, 1917. Local men served in Company A (later known as B), 198th Machine Gun Battalion; Company I (later known as D), 150th Machine Gun Battalion; and Company E, 4th Regiment of the National Guard of Pennsylvania. All of these companies fought in Europe.<sup>50</sup>

Letters written by church members in the service provided updates on the war. Ernest Kistler, whose father had served as pastor at St. Paul’s and who had been raised in Reading, served in the ambulance service of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). He described the uncomfortable conditions in France in December 1917; cold and separation from friends were among his complaints. He further noted, “At this time when the Teutonic nations are putting forth their reserve strength and playing the final act in the drama of the world war, those at home should forget self and especially selfish sentiment that is to be used for parade purposes after the war, and they should think only of their children being freed from future wars and enjoying the freedom and liberty of a world democracy.” Kistler concluded, “Germany is playing her last card now and it is a powerful one at that, and we the democratic nations of the earth should work in harmony in expelling autocracy from the world.”<sup>51</sup>

Lloyd Burkey, a member of Zion’s German Reformed Church, was a private in Company I, 149th Machine Gun Battalion, 42nd Rainbow Division, AEF. In a letter to his father James, Burkey noted that he and his fellow soldiers were in England and “have a nice warm place to sleep . . . heated by means of a coal stove.” Three soldiers shared a bed, with eighteen blankets between them. He further commented on the high price of tobacco and asked his father to send some.<sup>52</sup> Experiences like those described by Kistler and Burkey kept these congregations engaged in the war effort and supporting their members who served in the armed forces.

After the United States entered the war, the situation for these three congregations changed considerably. Once the United States declared war on Germany, Zion's German Reformed Church was perhaps the most patriotic congregation in Reading. In October 1917, Rev. Carl H. Gramm's sermons preached "that not only on Sunday, but in every prayer offered to God should the Christian people of America remember their soldier boys, as the men are doing a religious as well as a patriotic duty." Members of the congregation "prayed to God to protect, aid and be with the American troops now in the French trenches." At Sunday school on October 28, Gramm spoke about how the American soldiers in France were fighting for civilization.<sup>53</sup>

Young men of Zion's enlisted in the armed forces, and young women served as nurses. On December 9, 1917, Zion's unfurled a service flag at a union service of all Sunday School departments. Assistant superintendent of the Sunday School Charles Althouse read the names of the fifteen men and one woman serving in the army or navy or as Red Cross nurses. Reverend Gramm explained the symbolism of the flag in a patriotic address. Following the service, which including singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and "America," the flag was hung outside the church.<sup>54</sup> Ultimately, seventy men and three women of Zion's served during the First World War.<sup>55</sup>

By early 1918, the war began to affect Zion's in other ways. Conserving fuel was a high priority at the congregational meeting that January, and they temporarily abandoned mid-week services.<sup>56</sup> During the Lenten season, Wednesday evening services included Reverend Gramm reading letters from soldiers and sailors from the congregation.<sup>57</sup> The creation of Daylight Saving Time in March 1918 led to concerns about the timing of Easter morning worship services. Reverend Gramm commented to the *Reading News-Times*, "I think it is the patriotic duty of the churches to be the first ones to support the government in this new law and hold the services on Sunday according to the new time." He noted that he had announced it to the congregation at the previous Sunday's services and at every worship service during Holy Week.<sup>58</sup>

After Easter, "Buy Liberty Bonds and help bring the war to a successful conclusion" was the focus of a sermon on "Duty."<sup>59</sup> Gramm preached another sermon on "The Wise and Unwise Use of Money" two weeks later, again focusing "on the necessity of everyone buying Liberty bonds and thrift stamps."<sup>60</sup> An evening patriotic service on May 26, the Sunday before Memorial Day, honored over twenty young men of the congregation "serving Uncle Sam in the great war." The newspaper account of the service in the *Reading News-Times*, however, was not complimentary as it stated, "Remarks

touching on the young man were most pathetic and were given in the address of the pastor, Rev. C. H. Gramm.”<sup>61</sup>

Over 10 percent of the members of Zion’s German Reformed Church served in the armed forces or as nurses during the First World War. Of the seventy-three men and women of Zion’s involved in the conflict, four suffered wounds, and two died.<sup>62</sup> Sallie Fidler, a member of Company 10 Base Hospital Ambulance Corps, served in France.<sup>63</sup> Three sons of Agnes Johnson fought in the war. Harry, who crossed the Atlantic with Gen. John Pershing, informed her in a letter that he was gassed but was recovering; in a separate letter his brother Carl denied he had been wounded.<sup>64</sup> Lloyd Burkey, who had written to his father James while stationed in England, was wounded on July 15, 1918, the first day at Chateau-Thierry. According to the report in the *Reading News-Times*, “his right arm was shattered above the elbow by grenade fire, he had to run the gauntlet of a dozen enemy riflemen on his way back to the field hospital.” Burkey also suffered a bullet wound in his left arm above the elbow.<sup>65</sup>

The two members of Zion’s who died during the conflict had different experiences. On the morning of November 4, 1918, Pvt. Charles Arnold of Company I was wounded by a bursting shell. After receiving first aid from his platoon sergeant, he was sent to the field hospital, then to Base Hospital No. 32, dying a day later. Initially buried in France, his body was brought back to Pennsylvania in May 1921. Zion’s held a memorial service for Arnold on January 19, 1919. Rev. Carl H. Gramm spoke on “What the Church Can Learn from the Soldiers in the Trench,” and the congregation sang patriotic songs.<sup>66</sup>

The other death from Zion’s was someone who volunteered for service but never left the United States. Mary J. Scheirer had joined the Red Cross and was one of over a dozen Reading Hospital nursing graduates who served during the First World War. She died of Spanish Influenza at the Ellis Island (New York) Debarkation Hospital on October 5, 1918. Zion’s held a memorial service in her honor the following November 17, with Rev. Carl H. Gramm preaching on “Sacrifice” and Frank S. Livingood, president of Reading Hospital, noting Scheirer’s accomplishments. A soloist sang “When the Blue Star Turns Gold” during the service.<sup>67</sup>

Regional organizations for Reading’s German-language denominations also expressed support for the war effort. The conference of the United Evangelical churches in Reading that met from February 27 to March 5, 1918, had a different approach to the war. The Temperance Committee adopted

a resolution prohibiting the sale of alcohol within five miles of army camps and forwarded it to the secretary of war.<sup>68</sup> Rev. H. S. Schlegel, secretary of the Evangelical War Commission, read letters from soldiers who were church members, including one who died in battle shortly after the letter arrived home. Schlegel stated,

This war is the greatest equalizer in human life that there is in the world today and let us not think alone of the fact that it is a war of submarine and airships, but rather of spiritual ideals and standards, and that our men are encountering ethical standards wholly foreign to their lives and the moral breakdown to which they are most liable is one of the really big factors of the war.

Profanity and “the laxity of the sex problem” provided challenges to soldiers who wanted to live spiritual lives while fighting for their country. Rev. Dr. Worth M. Tippy, executive secretary of the Commission of the church and social service of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, suggested, “Pastors should get into communication with the young men of their congregation who are serving the colors and write to them often so as to keep them posted as to the progress being made at home by the church folk.” Tippy continued, “It will encourage the young men and give them more courage to fight on, and fight on, until world-wide peace is proclaimed.” He concluded, “And with America’s young men in the field victory is assured.”<sup>69</sup>

In May 1918, the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and adjacent states held their annual convention in Philadelphia. They passed resolutions enthusiastically supporting the United States government in the war. In addition, the Ministerium denounced the Kaiser and denied charges that he was a Lutheran. To reinforce their patriotism, the Lutheran clergy passed a resolution stating that the Lutheran Church was not a foreign church, but it was a global church. They also reiterated that the Lutheran Church in the United States did not have any connections with churches in Germany and certainly not with any churches associated with the Kaiser.<sup>70</sup>

Zion’s German Reformed Church hosted the German Synod of the East in September 1918, with representatives from eight states in attendance. Prof. Theodore F. Herman of Lancaster Theological Seminary preached on “The Church and the War,” and they elected Rev. Carl H. Gramm president of the Synod.<sup>71</sup> The synod adopted the following resolution: “We pledge our

patriotic loyalty and support to our country and government in these times of war and unrest, we commend the principles of justice freedom and righteousness involved in this war, and urge our people to pray for victory, which will lead to a peace, founded upon righteousness and truth.”<sup>72</sup>

Unlike St. John’s or Zion’s, St. Paul’s United Evangelical Church faced a unique challenge as a result of the war. Among the new members in December 1917 was Howard Myers, a soldier at Camp Gordon in Georgia. Myers decided to join after attending a YMCA meeting in camp and wrote to the church “asking to be enrolled as a member.”<sup>73</sup> Undoubtedly Myers was one of the servicemen honored on the service flag unfurled in church on March 3, 1918. The ceremony, however, caused controversy. The presentation speech made by Rev. J. D. Kistler, a former pastor at St. Paul’s visiting from Allentown, attacked “the use of the German language and the holding of German services in the church.”<sup>74</sup> In response, the language question was the main topic discussed at the congregational meeting the following Thursday. The rationale to eliminate using German was partly patriotic and partly because younger members did not understand German. As a resolution, the congregation agreed to hold German services on the first and third Sundays of each month “out of consideration of the older members.”<sup>75</sup>

Despite the decision at the congregational meeting, the issue of German language services continued to be controversial. English-speaking members of the congregation walked out of the April 7 morning service after realizing it was a German service. Rev. H. D. Kreidler, meanwhile, opposed preaching in German and had already reduced the number of German language services to two a month. Kreidler also opposed anything that supported Germany, and he delivered a patriotic sermon in English at the evening service.<sup>76</sup> However, a church rule stated that it required the support of only fifteen members to hold worship services in German twice a month. Young members of the church, however, especially those who served in the army, did not support using the German language. They wrote letters home urging the members to dispense with German preaching. One of them stated, “The nature, the manners and customs of a people are embodied in its language.” He continued, “Where a language is there is danger of breeding the nature which that language embodies, and for this reason the German language should be discontinued.” Reverend Kreidler, as pastor of St. Paul’s, indicated when questioned by the *Reading News-Times* that the congregation would soon settle the matter “to the satisfaction of all the members.”<sup>77</sup>

The following month, members of the congregation agreed to amend the church bylaws to state if three-fourths of the members opposed German preaching, it would be abolished.<sup>78</sup> The congregation voted unanimously in early June to discontinue using the German language in all worship services.<sup>79</sup> Following this decision, prayer meetings were held for the twenty-four men from the church and Sunday School serving in the armed forces.<sup>80</sup> St. Paul's removal of "the language of the Kaiser and the Huns" even received mention in a Paris newspaper. An unnamed soldier wrote to a Reading relative, "My captain saw it . . . and read it to me. Believe me, it made the boys feel good." The relative shared the news with Reverend Kreidler.<sup>81</sup>

By 1918, opposition to using the German language expanded to include teaching it in Reading schools. When the war began, educational leaders, in response to President Woodrow Wilson's message to Congress advocating a trained citizenship for national defense, included military training in the public schools. Children would be drilled in marching in addition to the usual calisthenics, and older boys received training in maneuvers.<sup>82</sup> At the High School for Girls, culture took precedence over military training. The Literary Society held a program in February 1915 at which "each girl responded to her name by reading a German proverb."<sup>83</sup> After the United States entered the war, however, German proverbs would not be welcomed. In November 1917, the *Reading News-Times* reported that students at Boys' High School had torn out the picture of the Kaiser from the German grammar books.<sup>84</sup> By April 1918, concern about teaching German became more prominent. "A Reading Patriot" remarked in a *News-Times* editorial:

The militaristic ideals of the German rulers have been propagated for centuries in an underhanded way by the German diplomats until no race of people is free from its taint. These diplomats knew how to spread their ideals. They knew the language of a race contains the nature bred in that race. They had bred the militaristic nature in the German people and they proceeded to spread this nature by introducing their language into other countries.<sup>85</sup>

The author further stated, "The German language has a strong hold right here in Berks county and it is up to us to root it out . . . it is the duty of those who remain at home to wipe out the German menace within our borders, namely the German language."<sup>86</sup>

In response to complaints like this, the Reading high schools discontinued teaching German beginning in the 1918–19 school year. The editor of the *News-Times* noted, “Educators in some cities have been advising against such a radical step, and take the ground that we are not fighting the German language, but the German people.” He continued, “Their attitude, however, meets with no favor,” and concluded, “We are fighting not alone the German nation, but we are fighting anything and everything German.”<sup>87</sup> In August, the editor recommended that French should be taught in high school to replace German, rationalizing that returning soldiers who were fighting in France will have talked with French soldiers and citizens and undoubtedly would have learned French phrases.<sup>88</sup> The ban on teaching German in Reading’s high schools continued until 1924, when the school board reinstated it after realizing its graduates “found it necessary to have some knowledge of German for their college course.”<sup>89</sup>

Opposition to teaching German extended to parochial education as well. St. John’s parochial school first opened in 1865, and faced challenges by the late 1910s. It had only two teachers and forty-five students in June 1918, leading the congregation to discuss closing the school. Prominent members agreed to donate money to keep it operating and increased the teachers’ pay. The school taught “English as well as German, but the religious instruction has always been in the German language.”<sup>90</sup>

In a letter to the editor of the *Reading News-Times*, Hattie May Shepler questioned why St. John’s parochial school continued to instruct pupils German after public schools discontinued teaching it. She asked, “Only a suggestion but don’t you think Reading can exist without the German teaching?”<sup>91</sup> Partly because of anti-German sentiment and partly because of declining enrollment, the parochial school closed in December 1918, with the remaining students entering public schools.<sup>92</sup>

Opposition to using the German language was just one way Reading’s citizens declared their loyalties during the war. In June 1918, Reading hosted a patriotic rally to support the troops. Rev. Carl H. Gramm of Zion’s opened the rally with a prayer. State legislator Wilson G. Sarig, the main speaker, remarked, “At the outbreak of the war the citizens of this county proved that though their ancestors may have been German they themselves were going to be loyal to the country which sheltered them.” Sarig further noted, “The difference between Berks County German and a native German was as great as the difference between day and night.” Rev. S. M. Dissinger, pastor of Grace United Evangelical Church in Kutztown, referred to the Germans as “the



hell hounds of civilization” and stated, “We must protect our freedom which Germany is menacing and trampling upon.” The audience sang “America,” “Keep the Home Fires Burning,” “Over There,” and “The Star Spangled Banner” during the event.<sup>93</sup> At another rally in August, participants unfurled a flag with 212 stars.<sup>94</sup>

By the summer of 1918, the editor of the *Reading News-Times* expanded the scope of anti-German sentiment and began attacking German language institutions in the city. The new Eighteenth ward, organized in 1918, had street names honoring generals from Reading and major US military leaders. The newspaper also advocated changing “Hun” names for city streets.<sup>95</sup> One of the proposed changes was to rename Hampden Park and Reservoir to Liggett Park in honor of Gen. Hunter Liggett, a First World War general. However, 353 members of POSEA Camp 329 sent a resolution to City Council protesting the change because the city had established the park to commemorate someone involved in the American Revolution.<sup>96</sup>

By September, the newspaper expanded its discontent by advocating the anglicization of names of German clubs. The editor particularly targeted the Turn Verein, Liederkrantz, and Männerchor.<sup>97</sup> The Turn Verein, a gymnastic organization established in 1891, in July 1918 celebrated a flag raising that included the Ideal orchestra playing patriotic songs.<sup>98</sup> The Liederkrantz, a social organization, had previously shown “a patriotic stereopticon picture show” that included “view of Germany and Austria” and “scenes of war and military life,” possibly leading to the concerns.<sup>99</sup> It also had hosted a women’s suffrage meeting in April 1915.<sup>100</sup> In the midst of these attacks, the Reading Liederkrantz held a program in late September that included the Peerless band and the Ideal orchestra playing patriotic songs and raising two flags, one an American flag and the other a service flag containing forty stars to honor members and their sons serving in the armed forces.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, the Harmonie-Männerchor decided in mid-June to discourage using the German language at either of the society’s homes.<sup>102</sup>

The attacks continued throughout the fall. “There is such a wealth of regular United States material for the purpose that this city should not stand for any organization that persists in clinging to the Hun language for its title,” the editor stated on October 1.<sup>103</sup> On October 17, the editor further noted, “A change would be at once appropriate and patriotic and serve to remove the suspicion which, justly or unjustly, now attaches to them.” He continued, “Their names at present are in the language used by the murderous hordes that butcher women and children and are today killing and maiming



Reading and Berks county boys over there.”<sup>104</sup> Despite these attacks, none of these groups changed their names, and the Reading Liederkrantz still exists today.

Perhaps the most significant event, which attracted national attention, was the federal raid on the Wyomissing homes and offices of Ferdinand Thun and Henry K. Janssen. Thun and Janssen, both affiliated with St. John's and Zion's, were members of the Wyomissing Borough Council. Previously, the War Trade Board had visited the factories to find out if the companies had German investors and how many Liberty Loan Bonds they had purchased. Thun, who also was a director of Reading Trust Company, which sold the bonds, informed them he had purchased over \$200,000 worth. Before the United States entered the war against Germany, Thun and Janssen were heavy contributors to German war funds and had refused work orders from the Allies, possibly justifying the raid. However, after the war began, the owners offered Berkshire Knitting Mills to the government for its use.<sup>105</sup>

Thun also was an active member of the Germanistic Society, an organization that in 1916 and early 1917 did everything possible in their talks to justify Germany's entry in the war. In addition, his wife Anna had sent a telegram to President Wilson in April 1917 protesting against declaring war on Germany, for which a movement was started to depose her from the presidency of the Wyomissing Civic League. Since the war began, however, both Ferdinand and Anna Thun had been active in patriotic movements.<sup>106</sup> A reporter for the *Reading Eagle* noted that, when he visited the offices of the three businesses, he observed “war savings stamps, food conservation and other posters conspicuously displayed.” In contrast, the Philadelphia *Evening Public Ledger* reported federal agents saw “numerous pictures of Kaiser Wilhelm, General von Hindenburg and other German leaders” when they entered the buildings.<sup>107</sup>

Employees of the three companies actively participated in the patriotic parades, and the owners contributed to the Red Cross and various war funds in addition to purchasing Liberty Bonds. They also helped feed soldiers who had camped on the Wyomissing playgrounds before deployment. One of these soldiers was Harry Janssen, Henry K. Janssen's only son. Janssen had caused a ruckus at a local café prior to joining the army by refusing to stand when the “Star Spangled Banner” was played and made improper remarks about the government, causing him to be forcibly removed from the establishment. Harry Janssen died of pneumonia in October 1918 while at Camp Meade, Maryland, awaiting transport to France to fight in the war.<sup>108</sup>

On August 7, 1918, fifteen secret service agents searched Thun's and Janssen's offices at Textile Machine Works, Berkshire Knitting Mills, and Narrow Fabric Company. United States District Attorney Francis Fisher Kane of Philadelphia alleged the two men helped spread German propaganda and financially supported German periodicals and writers in the United States.<sup>109</sup> Federal agents also searched the New York offices of the companies.<sup>110</sup> Thun told the *Reading Eagle* that the federal agents seized only "checks, magazines, papers and appeals that we had received." None of the checks were for German propaganda. According to Assistant United States District Attorney Rosenbaum, however, "much evidence was obtained to show the strong sympathy of the suspects with Germany, at least before the war."<sup>111</sup> Neither man, nor the others whose homes were searched, ever faced formal charges for espionage, despite multiple search warrants and suspicions about stock fraud.<sup>112</sup>

The end of the war three months later received ample attention in the *Reading Eagle* and *Reading News-Times*. Over 75,000 people gathered in Penn Square to celebrate the Armistice, the largest ever seen in Reading. Churches held their regular worship services that Sunday; Rev. H. D. Kreidler spoke on "Taking a Firm Grasp of the Sword of the Spirit" at St. Paul's. Zion's celebrated Holy Communion at both worship services. The churches had resumed worship services the previous Sunday after being closed the previous four weeks because of a ban on crowds due to the influenza epidemic.<sup>113</sup>

Despite the challenges, the war did not significantly affect normal congregational business for any of these congregations. Ministers baptized children, confirmed youth and adults, married members and nonmembers, and performed funerals. Between August 1, 1914, when the war began, and November 11, 1918, when Germany surrendered, the pastors at these three congregations baptized 448 infants, youth, and adults and performed 224 marriages. The clergy at St. John's and Zion's buried 329 people, at least one of whom was in the service.<sup>114</sup>

Unlike St. John's and St. Paul's, Zion's German Reformed Church did not confront the same language issues. Rev. Carl H. Gramm continued to preach in German during the morning services and in English for the evening services throughout most of the war. On November 4, 1918, the Consistory voted to hold morning worship services on the first and third Sundays in German and on the second and fourth Sundays in English, with services on a fifth Sunday also to be held in English.<sup>115</sup> Patriotism continued to be prominent; the boys' Sunday School class, taught by Mrs. Carl H. Gramm,

presented a patriotic musicale in February 1919 that included an address on Washington and Lincoln by Reverend Gramm, and the audience concluded the program with the “Star-Spangled Banner.”<sup>116</sup> That November, the congregation honored its returning soldiers and nurses with an elaborate reception that was attended by Mrs. Agnes Johnson and her three soldier sons; Sallie Fidler, mentioned earlier, who now lived in Philadelphia; and Lloyd Burkey, who had been wounded in France, along with most of the other servicemen from the church who served during the war.<sup>117</sup>

One hundred years after members of Reading’s three German-language congregations faced challenges about using their native tongue during worship services and in instruction, only one of these congregations still remains open for worship. St. Paul’s United Evangelical Church became St. Paul’s Evangelical Congregational Church in 1923 after another church division. In June 1996, it merged with Bethany Evangelical Congregational Church and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church to form Community Evangelical Congregational Church, which then met in Shillington and now meets in Lower Heidelberg Township. The building became home to Segunda Tesalonica Christiana Asambleas De Dios, a Latino Assembly of God congregation.<sup>118</sup> Zion’s German Reformed Church became Zion’s Reformed Church after changing to English-only services in 1927 following the departure of Rev. Carl H. Gramm to New Brunswick, New Jersey. It became Zion’s Evangelical and Reformed Church in 1934 following a denominational merger and Zion’s United Church of Christ in 1957 following yet another merger. Zion’s United Church of Christ closed its doors in September 2010, with the property purchased by Christ Presbyterian Church. The building now is home to Iglesia Misionera La Senda (Missionary Church the Path), a Latino congregation that caters to Dominican immigrants.<sup>119</sup> St. John’s German Lutheran certainly fared the best. The parochial school reopened, and in December 1936 it was lauded for trying to preserve the area’s German heritage.<sup>120</sup> The congregation still holds German-language services today, with bilingual services conducted regularly and German spoken at special services. Reading radio station WEEU broadcasts the sermons.<sup>121</sup> Congregations with German heritage are not as prominent in the city’s religious life, but it is certain that in at least two of these congregations by 1917, patriotism was clearly more important than loyalty to their ancestral homeland.

The First World War had a profound impact on Reading’s German churches. Members of these three congregations grappled with the question of which language to use for worship services, knowing that continuing

to preach in German would have repercussions. They also patriotically supported the war effort with few exceptions, serving in the armed forces and as nurses and purchasing Liberty Bonds. Denominational organizations denounced the German government and promoted a peaceful resolution to the conflict. In the end, Reading's German-American community proved its loyalty to the United States, and these three congregations demonstrated that while they may have used the German language in church business, they definitely were American churches.

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#### NOTES

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2. "Grim War Begins in All Europe," *Reading News-Times*, August 3, 1914; "Reading Families Worry for Their People in Europe," *Reading News-Times*, August 3, 1914. The *Reading News-Times* (later *Reading Times*) was published only Monday to Saturday. Quier's family was involved in publishing the *Reading Eagle*. For an overview of the response of Berks County (mainly Reading) to the First World War, see: Franklin Goldstein, "Berks County in World War I: The Sentiments and Actions of the People" (Typewritten, Henry Janssen Library, Berks History Center, Reading, Pennsylvania); Franklin Goldstein and Donald R. Shenton, "The People, Yes: Berks County in World War I," *Historical Review of Berks County* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1957): 42–47, 59–66. For more on German American tourists on the eve of World War I, see: Joseph B. Neville Jr., "Apostles for the Old Fatherland: German-American Tourists and the Outbreak of World War I," *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 47 (2012): 9–99.
3. "German Emperor Declares War Against Russia; Orders Mobilization of the Entire Army," *Reading Eagle*, August 2, 1914; "Reading Tourists Safe," *Reading Eagle*, August 2, 1914; "Dr. Gearhart Lucky in Getting Passage Home,"

- Reading Eagle*, August 2, 1914; "To Leave Berks for Fatherland," *Reading Eagle*, August 2, 1914; "Unveiling a Memorable Event in Local History," *Reading Eagle*, August 2, 1914.
4. J. Bennett Nolan, *The Reading Militia in the Great War* (Reading, PA: Historical Society of Berks County, [1921]), 9.
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6. *A Compendium of the Ninth Census (June 1, 1870), Compiled Pursuant to a Concurrent Resolution of Congress, and Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872), 448; *Compendium of the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880), Compiled Pursuant to An Act of Congress Approved August 7, 1882*, Part I (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1883), 546; Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890*, Part I (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1895), clxii, 671; United States Census Office, *Abstract of the Twelfth Census of the United States 1900* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1902), 107; 1910 Census, 96, 213; Raymond West Ford Jr., "Germans and Other Foreign Stock: Their Part in the Evolution of Reading, Pennsylvania" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1963), 38–68, 127–85.
7. For comparison, see: Donn Neal, "The Next Page: How the outbreak of World War I affected Pittsburgh's Germans and their Downtown Church," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 27, 2014.
8. H. S. Kidd, *Lutherans in Berks County: Two Centuries of Continuous Organized Church Life, 1723–1923* (Reading, PA: Reading Conference of The Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, 1923), 196–97; "St. John's Lutheran Church marks 150th Anniversary," *Reading Eagle*, August 7, 2010; "Church Dedication," *Reading Daily Times*, November 29, 1861 (source for quote); "Church Dedication," *Reading Daily Times*, November 30, 1861.
9. Kidd, *Lutherans in Berks County*, 198–99; "St. John's Lutheran Marks 150th Anniversary," *Reading Eagle*, August 7, 2010.
10. Morton L. Montgomery, *Historical and Biographical Annals of Berks County, Pennsylvania*, vol. 1 (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1909), 199.
11. "St. John's Lutheran Marks 150th Anniversary," *Reading Eagle*, August 7, 2010; Kidd, *Lutherans in Berks County*, 200; "St. John's Lutheran," *Reading News-Times*, July 10, 1916.
12. Montgomery, *Historical and Biographical Annals*, 1:199; Karen Guenther, "Ministering to the Needs of 'Foreign and American Germans': The Foundation

- and Early Years of Zion's German Reformed, in Reading," *Historical Review of Berks County* 81, no. 3 (Summer 2016): 7–12; Daniel Miller, *History of the Reformed Church in Reading, Pa.* (Reading, PA: Daniel Miller, 1905), 338–48.
13. "Church Record of the St. Paul's United Evangelical Church, Reading, Pa., [1900–1917]" [hereafter cited as "St. Paul's United Evangelical," vol. 1] (Handwritten, Henry Janssen Library, Berks History Center, Reading, PA), 6; "Church Record of the St. Paul's United Evangelical Church, Reading, Penna., [1917–1970]" [hereafter cited as "St. Paul's United Evangelical," vol. 2] (Handwritten, Henry Janssen Library, Berks History Center, Reading, PA), 1–2; Frank S. Mead, Samuel S. Hill, and Craig D. Atwood, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 11th ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 234. Reading had two YMCAs, one solely for employees of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad.
14. "Cornerstone Laying," *Reading News-Times*, July 7, 1900.
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18. "Local Minister Deplores War in Sunday Sermon," *Reading News-Times*, August 17, 1914. Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, wife of Kaiser Wilhelm II, gave the congregation a chalice in the 1890s that, as of August 2010, was still in the congregation's possession. "St. John's Lutheran Marks 150th Anniversary," *Reading Eagle*, August 7, 2010. It was not unusual for German American clergy to oppose the war in its early years. See: Thomas Reimer, "Distant Thunder: The German-American Clergy of Schenectady, New York, and the European War, 1914–1917," *New York History* 73, no. 3 (July 1992): 291–320.
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20. Ibid.
21. "St. John's German Lutheran," *Reading Eagle*, October 6, 1914.
22. "St. John's German Lutheran," *Reading Eagle*, May 3, 1915.
23. "Last Hours Were Made Happier," *Reading News-Times*, May 31, 1915.
24. "Zion Reformed," *Reading News-Times*, September 1, 1914; "Zion's Reformed," *Reading Eagle*, November 9, 1914; "Zion Reformed," *Reading News-Times*, December 15, 1914; "Zion Reformed," *Reading News-Times*, December 29, 1914; "Zion's Reformed," *Reading Eagle*, January 4, 1915; "Zion's Reformed," *Reading Eagle*, May 3, 1915.
25. "Flag Presentation and Patriotic Service," *Reading News-Times*, July 3, 1945; "Shoot English Flag is Advice of Pastor Gramm," *Reading News-Times*, July 5, 2015. St. Paul's United Evangelical Church also received a flag from the POA in April 1917. "Church Receives Gift of Flag," *Reading News-Times*, April 30, 1917.

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28. "St. Paul's U.E.," *Reading News-Times*, February 22, 1915; "Hatchets as Souvenirs," *Reading News-Times*, February 25, 1915.
29. "Bible Class Six Years Old," *Reading News-Times*, August 23, 1915.
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31. "Business Notes," *Reading News-Times*, July 17, 1915; "Machinery Made Here Sent to Bottom of Sea," *Reading Eagle*, July 16, 1915.
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34. "Get Supplies from Deutschland," *Reading News-Times*, November 11, 1916.
35. "The Textile Trade," *Reading News-Times*, July 23, 1916.
36. "Strike at Nolde and Horst Mill Called Off," *Reading News-Times*, June 15, 1915.
37. "Business Notes," *Reading News-Times*, July 20, 1915.
38. "Zion Reformed," *Reading News-Times*, March 30, 1915.
39. "Good Preaching More Needed Than Ever," *Reading Eagle*, August 2, 1915.
40. Minutes of the Consistory of Zion's German Reformed Church, January 15, 1917; January 6, 1919 (Handwritten, currently in the author's possession but to be deposited at the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society, Lancaster, PA); *1920 Church Manual, Zion's Reformed Church* (Reading, PA: By the Congregation, 1920), 27.
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42. "St. Paul's United Evangelical," 1:6.
43. "Imitation Pipe Organ," *Reading Eagle*, December 27, 1915.
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45. "Pastor's Birthday," *Reading News-Times*, January 25, 1916.
46. "German Song Service," *Reading News-Times*, March 2, 1916.
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  55. "Service Roll," *1920 Church Manual*, 19.
  56. "Zion's Reformed," *Reading News-Times*, January 8, 1918.
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  60. "Zion Reformed," *Reading Eagle*, April 22, 1918. The sale of Liberty Bonds and war stamps was also promoted by Rev. Philip Kirchner in worship services at St. John's Lutheran Church. "Urges Buying War Stamps," *Reading News-Times*, June 25, 1918. In contrast, the purchase of Liberty Bonds in Ohio was seen as a response to anti-German sentiment. See: Michael D. Thompson, "Liberty Loans, Loyalty Oaths, and the Street Name Swap: Anti-German Sentiment in Ohio, Spring 1918," *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 33 (1998): 145–47, 153.
  61. "Patriotic Service," *Reading News-Times*, May 27, 1918.
  62. "Service Roll," *1920 Church Manual*, 19.
  63. "Boyertown Man Selected Text for His Funeral," *Reading News-Times*, September 12, 1917.
  64. [No title], *Reading News-Times*, November 9, 1918.
  65. "Personals," *Reading News-Times*, August 30, 1918; "Wounded Man Returns," *Reading News-Times*, January 1, 1919; "Veteran Takes a Bride," *Reading Eagle*, June 19, 1921.



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70. "Lutherans Deny Kaiser Member," *Reading News-Times*, May 22, 1918. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod held similar views. See: Neil A. Johnson, "The Patriotism and Anti-Prussianism of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1914–1918," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (1966): 99–118.
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72. "Loyalty Pledge at the Synod," *Reading News-Times*, September 14, 1918.
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74. "St. Paul's U.E.," *Reading News-Times*, March 4, 1918. Kistler's son Ernest was fighting in France at this time.
75. "Bar German Service in St. Paul's Parish," *Reading News-Times*, March 9, 1918.
76. "Objected to German Service," *Reading News-Times*, April 8, 1918.
77. "German Sermons at St. Paul's U.E.," *Reading News-Times*, April 9, 1918.
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80. "Prayers for Soldiers," *Reading News-Times*, June 6, 1918.
  81. "French Paper Reports Reading Church Vote," *Reading Eagle*, June 13, 1918; "Local News Notes," *Reading News-Times*, June 15, 1918.
  82. "City Schools May Add Military Training," *Reading Eagle*, December 9, 1914.
  83. "Each Girl Responds with German Proverb," *Reading Eagle*, February 10, 1915.
  84. "Destroy Kaiser's Picture," *Reading News-Times*, November 17, 1917.
  85. "Opposed to the Teaching of German," *Reading News-Times*, April 15, 1918. Incidentally, Reading's last German language newspaper, *Der Readinger Adler* [the Reading Eagle] had ceased publication in 1913 and thus was not involved in the anti-German sentiment.
  86. Ibid.
  87. "German," *Reading News-Times*, April 19, 1918. Reading was not alone in facing this problem, as removing German language instruction was an issue nationwide. See: Petra DeWitt, "'Drifting Back into Their Old Ways': Local Efforts to Banish the German Language from Missouri During the Great War," *Missouri Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (April 2009): 161–82; Justine Greve, "Language and Loyalty: The First World War and German Instruction at Two Kansas Schools," *Kansas History* 37, no. 3 (Autumn 2014): 130–47; Amanda Kibler, "Speaking Like a 'Good American': National Identity and the Legacy of German Language Education," *Teachers College Record* 110, no. 6 (June 2008): 1241–68; Paul J. Ramsey, "The War against German-American Culture: The Removal of German-Language Instruction from the Indianapolis Schools, 1917–1919," *Indiana Magazine of History* 98, no. 4 (December 2002): 285–304; Vern J. Rippley, "Conflict in the Classroom: Anti-Germanism in Minnesota Schools, 1917–1919," *Minnesota History* 47, no. 5 (April 1981): 170–83; Mark Sonntag, "Fighting Everything German in Texas, 1917–1919," *Historian* 55, no. 4 (Summer 1994): 655–70; Thompson, "Liberty Loans, Loyalty Oaths, and the Street Name Swap," 142–45.
  88. "French in Schools," *Reading News-Times*, August 5, 1918.
  89. "German Again in Good Standing in High Schools," *Reading Eagle*, January 24, 1926. While the church building underwent renovations in 1923, Zion's German Reformed met across the street at the Boys High School, now City Hall. The Consistory decided to eliminate German language services while meeting there because German was not taught in the high school at that time. Minutes of the Consistory of Zion's German Reformed Church, March 5, 1923.
  90. "Not to Stop Parochial School," *Reading News-Times*, June 11, 1918.
  91. "Still Teaching German," *Reading News-Times*, October 5, 1918. Unlike public schools, opposition to German language instruction in parochial schools was not nationwide. See: Adam C. Hill, "Lutheran Schools in Saint Louis, 1917–1929," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 117–24.

92. "Parochial School is Closed After 53 Years," *Reading News-Times*, December 4, 1918.
93. "Patriotic Rally Hears Some Inspiring Addresses," *Reading News-Times*, June 22, 1918.
94. "Flag With 212 Stars Unfurled at Patriotic Fete," *Reading News-Times*, August 23, 1918.
95. "Liggett Avenue and Pershing Boulevard in New Eighteenth Ward," *Reading News-Times*, June 26, 1918. Renaming streets was not unique to Reading. See: Thompson, "Liberty Loans, Loyalty Oaths, and the Street Name Swap," 150–51. Efforts to memorialize General Liggett after his death in 1936 failed, as the Socialist-dominated city council rejected a request to erect a boulder in City Park in his memory because "too much stress has been placed upon the glories of war." Ruth Shaffer, "City Anti-War Socialists Reject Memorial for Reading-Born WWI Military Hero: (DIS) Honoring a Hero," *Historical Review of Berks County* 81, no. 4 (Fall 2016): 42–47, quote from p. 44.
96. "Oppose Change in Park Name," *Reading News-Times*, August 10, 1918.
97. "Change These Names," *Reading News-Times*, September 24, 1918; "Hun Names in Reading," *Reading News-Times*, September 27, 1918. The experiences of Reading's clubs typified what was happening nationwide. See: Harry H. Anderson, "The Founding of the Wisconsin Club: A Tale of Tribulation and Triumph," *Milwaukee History* 14, no. 3 (September 1991): 93–102; Erna Ott Gwinn, "The Liederkrantz in Louisville, 1877–1959," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (1981): 40–59; Chris Richardson, "With Liberty and Justice For All? The Suppression of German-American Culture During World War I," *Missouri Historical Review* 90, no. 1 (October 1995): 7989; Edward C. Wolf, "Wheeling's German Singing Societies," *West Virginia History* 42, no. 1/2 (October 1980): 1–56.
98. "Turn-Verein at Silver Jubilee Recalls Youth," *Reading News-Times*, November 11, 1916; "Flag Raising at the Turn-Verein Home," *Reading News-Times*, July 22, 1918.
99. "Coming Events," *Reading News-Times*, September 30, 1914.
100. "Suffrage Address at Liederkrantz Bazaar," *Reading News-Times*, April 28, 1915.
101. "Liederkrantz to Have Double Flag Raising," *Reading News-Times*, September 30, 1918.
102. "No German Talk at the Maennerchor," *Reading Eagle*, June 13, 1918.
103. "What Say You, Fellow Americans," *Reading News-Times*, October 1, 1918.
104. "Change Names," *Reading News-Times*, October 17, 1918.
105. "Ferdinand Thun Denounces Raid; Says All His Contributions to German Causes Were for Charity, Result of 'Loafer Talk,'" *Reading News-Times*, August 8, 1918; "Ferdinand Thun Director of Reading Trust Co.," *Reading News-Times*, January 23, 1917; "Wyomissing Council," *Reading News-Times*, January 4, 1916. Rev. Philip Kirchner of St. John's also participated in the Germanistic Society's programs.

106. "Women Incensed at Anti-War Appeal," *Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger*, March 17, 1917; "Secret Service Men Searched Women's Store," *Reading News-Times*, August 9, 1918.
107. "Sensation for Wyomissing," *Reading Eagle*, August 8, 1918; "Little Germany in Raided Homes," *Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger*, August 8, 1918.
108. "Ferdinand Thun Denounces Raid; *News-Times*, August 8, 1918; "Sensation for Wyomissing," *Reading Eagle*, August 8, 1918; "Action in Two Weeks on Wyomissing Case Likely; Arrests or Vindications," *Reading News-Times*, August 12, 1918; "Soldier Janssen Ill," *Reading News-Times*, October 18, 1918; "Pneumonia Kills Hamburg Soldier," *Reading News-Times*, October 21, 1918; "Funeral," *Reading News-Times*, October 24, 1918.
109. "Search Three Berks Plants," *Reading Eagle*, August 7, 1918.
110. "Ferdinand Thun Denounces Raid," *Reading News-Times*, August 8, 1918; "Search Three Berks Plants," *Reading Eagle*, August 7, 1918; "Sensation for Wyomissing," *Eagle*, August 8, 1918; "Propaganda Hunt By Federal Agents," *New York Times*, August 8, 1918.
111. "Little Germany in Raided Homes," *Evening Public Ledger*, August 8, 1918.
112. "37 New Search Warrants," *Reading News-Times*, August 12, 1918; "Action in Two Weeks on Wyomissing Case Likely," August 12, 1918; "Stock Swindle Now Charged in Propaganda Case," *Reading News-Times*, August 15, 1918.
113. "City Delirious With Enthusiasm; Fully 75,000 People Get Out of Bed to Parade, Cheer and Sing—Kaiser's Mustache Turns Down Instead of Up," *Reading Eagle*, November 11, 1918; "Largest Demonstration Reading Has Ever Had," *Reading Eagle*, November 11, 1918; "St. Paul's United Evangelical," *Reading Eagle*, November 11, 1918; "Bright Sunday as Churches Resume Regular Services," *Reading News-Times*, November 4, 1918.
114. "St. Paul's United Evangelical," 1:252–55, 294–97, and 2:passim; "Church Record of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Reading, Pennsylvania" (Handwritten, Henry Janssen Library, Berks History Center, Reading, PA), passim; "Register of the Zion's Reformed Congregation in the City of Reading, PA" (Handwritten, currently in the author's possession but to be deposited at the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society, Lancaster, PA), 162–73, 246–51, 468–79.
115. Minutes of the Consistory for Zion's German Reformed Church, November 4, 1918.
116. "Patriotic Musicales," *Reading News-Times*, February 20, 1919.
117. "Zion Congregation Greets Veterans," *Reading News-Times*, November 8, 1919.
118. "Final Farewell: 101-year old church closes doors for merger," *Reading Eagle*, December 30, 1995; "2 churches come to an end," *Reading Eagle*, June 8, 1996; "St. Paul's story strikes some familiar chords," *Reading Eagle*, June 8, 1996; "Latino congregation to inaugurate building," *Reading Eagle*, October 26, 1996; "Merged EC church finally 'home,'" *Reading Eagle*, September 11, 1999.

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119. Minutes of the Consistory for Zion's Reformed Church, July 1, 1927, January 13, 1928; Carol Balinski, "Zion's UCC holds final services, sells building," *Reading Eagle*, October 16, 2010; "Transactions," *Reading Eagle*, April 5, 2015.
120. Thomas N. Boland, "Local Saturday School Strives to Preserve German Influence in Berks County," *Reading Eagle*, December 27, 1936.
121. "St. John's Lutheran Church marks 150th Anniversary," *Reading Eagle*, August 7, 2010.